

News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Thursday, August 6, 2009

First 2009 Wyoming West Nile Virus Cases Reported

The state's first human West Nile virus (WNV) cases have been reported to the Wyoming Department of Health and identified through lab testing in an adult female from Converse County and an adult male from Platte County.

"While case counts have varied widely, there has been West Nile activity each year since the virus arrived in Wyoming so these newly reported cases are no surprise," said Dr. Tracy Murphy, state epidemiologist with the Wyoming Department of Health.

"Wyoming residents really should take steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites," Murphy said. WNV is spread by mosquitoes after they feed on infected birds and then bite people, other birds and animals.

The "5 D's" of WNV prevention are:

- 1) DAWN and 2) DUSK - Most mosquito species prefer to feed at dawn or dusk, so avoid spending time outdoors during these times.
- 3) DRESS - Wear shoes, socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when spending time outdoors or when mosquitoes are most active. Clothing should be light-colored and made of tightly woven materials.
- 4) DRAIN - Reduce the amount of standing water in or near your property because mosquitoes breed in shallow, stagnant water.
- 5) DEET - Use an insect repellent containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide). Spray clothing with repellents containing permethrin or DEET because mosquitoes can bite through thin clothing. Permethrin should not be used on bare skin. Another insect repellent, Picaridin (KBR 3023), is also highly effective.

Most people infected with WNV never develop symptoms. Among those who become ill, symptoms include fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph nodes. A very small percentage of infected persons develop West Nile neuroinvasive disease (i.e. meningitis or encephalitis) with symptoms such as severe headache, fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions and paralysis.

The Wyoming Public Health Laboratory offers free WNV testing for healthcare providers with suspected cases in their patients.

In Wyoming last year there were 10 human West Nile virus cases with no deaths reported. There were 185 human cases with 2 deaths in 2007; 65 human cases with 2

deaths in 2006; 12 human cases with 2 deaths in 2005; 10 human cases with no deaths in 2004; 393 human cases with 9 deaths in 2003; and 2 human cases with no deaths in 2002.

More information about WNV is available online www.badskeeter.org or by calling 1-877-WYO-BITE.

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